



September 4, 2007

To Members of the House of Representatives:

The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) urges the defeat of H.R. 811 – *The Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2007*. AAPD supports voting systems that are accessible, secure, accurate and re-countable. Thanks to the efforts of House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and others, H.R. 811 has been improved. Unfortunately, it still jeopardizes accessible voting and imposes unrealistic expectations on election administrators.

H.R. 811 requires that the paper is the ballot of record. With a significant number of people with disabilities voting on touch screens, their vote will not be counted because there is not a corresponding vote on paper. A new requirement in the legislation is that in 2008 all touch screens must use a reel-to-reel paper trail. Reel-to-reel paper trail is a printer system that has been used in a number of elections with very troublesome results. The printers consistently fail to capture all votes cast on touch screens. In the Cleveland 2004 Presidential Election, ten percent of the paper ballots were not countable because: printer failed to print; paper reel failed to advance; ink smeared; or paper jammed or was torn. The manufacturers say they have improved but have not eliminated this problem. The "improved" reel-to-reel printers have not been tested in actual elections.

H.R. 811 also requires that new accessible voting systems must be in place by 2012. Machines that meet these standards do not exist. It will take six years from the date of passage to develop new voting systems.

The audit process in the bill is too burdensome, too complicated and will require billions of dollars to be spent by local jurisdictions in future elections. This legislation is the mother of all unfunded mandates.

AAPD believes that we can improve accessibility, security and accuracy in our elections. We are willing to work with Congress to develop practical solutions that are realistic and judiciously implemented.

H.R. 811 not only disenfranchises voters with disabilities, it risks destabilization of the nation's existing election administration system.

Sincerely,

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